



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *New York, NY*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of New York for a Brownfields Pilot. New York City (NYC) contains at least 4,000 acres of vacant industrial properties. These industrial areas tend to be on NYC's waterfront and in the most disadvantaged sections in the City, where a high percentage of households are below the Federal poverty threshold. Many other properties are contaminated from illegal dumping and unregulated commercial activities. Brownfields are affecting public health and the environment, discouraging investment due to fears of liability, delaying development, tying up NYC resources that could be spent on other services, and impacting potential low-income-housing funds.

### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this Pilot is to create a framework for the identification of measures that will accelerate the pace and enlarge the scale of cleanup and redevelopment of the City's brownfields sites. A public/private Task Force will conduct data gathering and analysis of past cleanups, current brownfields site-assessment procedures and redevelopment practices, and obstacles to brownfields reuse. Over 140 lenders, attorneys, community representatives, environmental consultants, government agency representatives, and other professionals have committed their time and resources

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*New York, New York*

**Date of Award:**  
March 1996

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets five demonstration sites to be chosen from over 4,000 acres of vacant industrial property in New York City.

### Contacts:

Annette Barbaccia  
Mayor's Office of  
Environmental Coordination  
New York, NY  
(212) 788-2937

Larry D'Andrea  
U.S. EPA - Region 2  
(212) 637-4314  
dandrea.larry@  
epamail.epa.gov

Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

to the NYC brownfields effort. Five demonstration sites will be chosen by the Task Force during this Pilot program, upon which innovative approaches will be tested.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Pilot has:

- Approved the non-profit New York City Partnership as the City's Cooperative Partner for the Brownfields Pilot to assist NYC in carrying out the initiative;
- Formed a Steering Committee that has held several meetings to coordinate Pilot activities. The Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from City agencies, including the Mayor's Office of Environmental Coordination, the Law Department, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Economic Development Corporation, the Department of Health, the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, the City Planning Department, the Department of Design and Construction, and the non-profit New York City Partnership; and
- Analyzed existing brownfields testing, sampling, and rededication of hazardous materials standards in support of the selection of the five demonstration sites.

The Pilot is:

- Preparing several case studies and analyses, including: case studies of recent projects; an overview of guidelines applied to typical NYC sites; an analysis of the most prevalent contaminants in NYC; research on innovative guidelines nationwide; and an analysis of issues surrounding risk-based standards;
- Refining a preliminary format for gathering data on several past City cleanups;
- Campaigning to involve a broad range of stakeholders in the brownfields initiative. Three hundred twenty-five potential stakeholders were contacted to ascertain their level of interest, expertise, and resources available to contribute to Task Force activities;

- Conducting interviews with developers, lenders, and insurers to help characterize thresholds for investment; and
- Conducting a series of meetings with local elected officials that will continue throughout all phases of the Pilot. These meetings have identified issues and concerns of the stakeholders, and also keep them apprised of project efforts.

## **LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Experience with the New York City Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Undertaking an analysis of Brownfields sites that might be potential candidates for funding under the 1996 New York State Bond Act. Under this Act, \$200 million is available State-wide to help pay for testing and rededication of sites that meet the Act's requirements for brownfields.
- Developing a primer and outline of key laws, regulations, and brownfields issues to ensure proper procedures are followed and to take advantage of resource leveraging options.
- Preparing an outline of provisions that are part of the typical State voluntary cleanup program.